

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Monday, July 15, 2019

Alabama Industrial Development Training Center

The AIACC met on Monday, July 15, 2019, at the Alabama Industrial Development Training Center. The meeting was called to order by AIACC Co-Chair Whitney Meade. Also in attendance were Council members: Fred Biasini, Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Robert Caldwell, Tametria Conner, Suzanne Dowling, Megan Everett, Erich Grommet, Heather Jones, Justin Schwartz, and Chris Stewart. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Beverly Churchwell on behalf of Stephanie Azar, Eliza Belle on behalf of Lynn Beshear, Nancy Thomas on behalf of Lucian Cronkite, Laurie Eldridge-Auffant on behalf of Scott Harris, and Angel Loewen on behalf of Melanie Jones. Also in attendance was Anna McConnell, State Autism Coordinator.

The minutes from the April 15, 2019 meeting were approved and adopted.

Whitney Meade welcomed attendees to the AIACC meeting.

Anna McConnell, on behalf of DMH, noted that stakeholder meetings were occurring regarding changes due to the Home and Community Based Settings rule during the week with some teleconference options.

Standards of Practice: Ages 0-5

Kimberly Tomeny noted that she and Angie Barber are leading workshops for Early Intervention / Part C programs in each of the EI districts regarding earliest red flags for autism and coaching for caregiver led interventions. She also noted that screenings for ASD are being addressed by Part C – by catching children who would not qualify for a Developmental Disabilities eligibility, but may have need for services based on ASD related presentation

Standards of Practice: Ages 6-13

Heather Jones noted discussions regarding utilization of primary care in diagnostic process to reduce comprehensive assessment clinic wait times. She also highlighted the issue of mental health and ASD. Most children see a pediatrician regularly, but not mental health providers. For those individuals with ASD and co-occurring mental health issues, they are at a greater disadvantage, as many mental health providers will not see clients with ASD. These are areas that overlap with the Diagnostic and Health workgroup, and plan to collaborate are in process.

Standards of Practice: Ages 14-20

Erich Grommet noted that the group has met with Karen Jenkins and Tina Dortch at ADRS and discussed transition needs for individuals with ASD. Primary issues identified are: the decreased availability of transition services and continued support after employment has been obtained, the limited flexibility of plans, parents lack of knowledge that they can request to speak to a rehabilitation counselor. Plans are in place to meet with Jeana Winter, who recommended the "Engage Alabama" app which helps students with DD prepare for their own IEP meeting. Other concerns mentioned were staff not being formally trained in the full transition planning process, will need ongoing discussions on how to better coordinate between agencies for DD needs to include transportation. Need identified were: web presence, trainings and ongoing resource education for parents/teens, and empowering parents. ADAP asked if there was specific credentialing for transition specialists. Commissioner Burdeshaw noted that a trio of providers are needed regarding transition –School, Vocational Rehabilitation, and DMH.

Standards of Practice: Ages 21+

Sarah Ryan discussed the ongoing difficulty of what is not available. Current conversations and trends focus on independency and living with caregivers. Will need to continue to explore and evaluate updated longer range goals, education to parents so they can be involved in long term planning.

Areas of consideration/to do items in the near future:

- Develop a resource manual for client/parents for adults with ASD
- How to pull together agencies regionally to coordinate services
- Long range waiver services to include additional funding sources/options
- Employment Opportunities/Partner Companies willing to hire
- Look at successful resources in other states and build plan
- Safety considerations for caregivers (tailor safety plan to all above resources)

Standards of Practice: Diagnostics and Health

Justin Schwartz and members discussed updating the Strategic Plan with no new updates. It was noted that Stephanie Anderson has been contributing greatly to this effort.

Standards of Practice: Training and Education

Sonia Cleckler noted that the current focus is ongoing training to parents and providers. It was noted that when it comes to this area outcomes will be better if parents/caregivers are overinformed than uninformed. Inclusion of first responder trainings will be included. There is overlap in many of these activities with other groups, so will try to avoid that where possible.

Public Awareness:

Melanie Jones noted that the DD Council approved the ASA Autism Friendly Initiative. They are currently building a website and developing materials. More self-advocates are needed.

Regional Autism Network Update:

Lizzie Griffith reported that the RAN has been getting calls asking for direct services, ABA, & medication, but these are not legislated activities of the RAN. Assistance with making sure referring entities know the role of the ran (can help provide resource information but cannot directly provide these services) is appreciated. As more services come available, understanding all participants' roles will be important.

UAB- Professional Training has been conducted by Richard Rector through many library and community programs. Public Education workshops continue to be successful.

UA- The University has hired an Autism Cluster. The Tuscaloosa Police Department is participating in an 8-week training program related to ASD through the RAN. The school system has also requested RAN training.

AU- The AU RAN has participated in trainings related to Child Abuse and is looking into partnerships with BRACE (Building Rural Alliances through Collaboration and Education). Coffee Chats are ongoing. Teacher trainings have been requested. Maria, the Family Navigator for the AU RAN has been participating in Public Education opportunities.

UAH- Recently hired faculty for the Masters ABA program. UAH will be offering the six core sequence with both in class and distance options.

Other Announcements

Beverly Churchwell noted that providers enrolled in Alabama Medicaid to deliver ABA therapy, 84 applications have been received and 46 of those have been enrolled.

Tametria Conner noted that she will be a keynote speaker at the AL disability Conference and is doing trainings in Dothan. She is focusing on EI and childcare partners in particular.

Suzanne Dowling noted that the Legislature goes into session in February. She requested any priority needs related to ASD be discussed in the October AIACC meeting.

Commissioner Burdeshaw introduced Cathy Caldwell and welcomed her to ADRS. She is the new Children's Rehabilitation Services Director. She also noted that ADRS was able to gain funding for ASD in the EI program.

Justin Schwartz reported the spring meeting allowed time to speak with the Executive Committee, discuss pediatricians and ASD diagnoses. He is also leading discussions about how pediatricians can effectively care for patients with ASD. The Alabama Child Health Alliance (ACHIA) has new efforts in place such as the Quality Improvement Collaboration to elevate and standardize care. A focus on 2020 is on early screening and includes ASD in the primary setting. He also noted that the Pediatric Access to Telemental Healthy Svs (PATHS) is a mental health project with levels of more convenient services for families, which includes teleconsultation and telehealth services.

Announcements/Upcoming Events:

AAPN- Dr. Teresa McCall is involved with the National Core Ind. Project during following AAPN meeting.

Note other activities on agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, October 21, 2019

Recording Secretary

A. McConnell